United Nations

Press Release

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council decides to establish Compensation Fund to pay for war damages caused by Iraq.

- United Nations and Iraqi authorities reach agreement on establishment of security guard contingent in northern Iraq to protect Kurdish refugees.

- Special Commission recommends to Security Council that Iraq's ballistic missiles be destroyed on the spot since their disposal does not pose any public health threat.

- Security Council decides to establish observer mission in El Salvador with initial task of monitoring human rights.

- Secretary-General strongly deplores Israeli deportation over the weekend of four Palestinians from the occupied territories.

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The Security Council decided today to establish a Compensation Fund to pay foreign Governments, nationals and corporations for loss and damage, including environmental damage, caused by Iraq during the Gulf war. By a vote of 14 in favour to none against, with Cuba abstaining, the Council decided that the Fund should be financed by Iraq's oil exports in the manner to be prescribed by a Governing Council which is to be located at the United Nations Office in Geneva.

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A United Nations official told correspondents today that agreement had been reached between the United Nations and Iraqi authorities on the establishment of a security force to protect the Kurdish refugees.

He said the guard force was to be composed of staff from United Nations offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna, and might be complemented by other personnel who already had some experience in that field.

(more)

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Talking to correspondents this morning, the Secretary-General said the idea was to have a force of some 400-500 observers who would be arriving in the area in two weeks. He said he was going to inform the Security Council of the implementation of the idea.

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A Special Commission has recommended to the Security Council that Iraq's ballistic missiles be destroyed on the spot since their disposal does not pose any public health threat. The destruction of Iraqi weapons is to be monitored by the Commission, which was set up under the Council's resolution of 3 April.

The Commission's plan was convened to the Council in a report by the Secretary-General which said that those missiles not disposed of immediately would be secured, sealed and appropriately documented for later disposal. Items such as warheads and fuel might be moved to a special destruction location or facility and disposed of there.

The method of destruction of Iraq's chemical weapons had yet to be determined since since the process involved safety and environmental hazards, according to the report. The Special Commission would be looking into the possibility of the construction of a special destruction facility, or the use of transportable or mobile destruction equipment.

The report said negotiations were currently under way with countries that possessed the technology to destroy nuclear materials to see where the destruction will take place.

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The Security Council this afternoon decided to establish a United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) to monitor all agreements concluded between the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN), starting with verification of the Agreement on Human Rights signed by both parties at San José on 26 July 1990.

The Council unanimously approved the recommendations of the Secretary-General and established an initial mandate period of 12 months for the Mission. ONUSAL's subsequent tasks are to be subject to the Council's approval.

ONUSAL's verification tasks will include active monitoring of the human rights situation in El Salvador; investigation of specific cases of alleged human rights violations; promotion of human rights in the country; and making recommendations to eliminate violations and promote respect for human rights.

According to a report by the Secretary-General, the total cost of the Mission for the initial 12 months is estimated at approximately $32 million, including one-time major procurement of vehicles and communications equipment.

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The Secretary-General has expressed regret about the deportation by Israeli authorities over the weekend of four Palestinians from the occupied territories.

In a statement through his Spokesman, the Secretary-General strongly deplored the action, which he said was in violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention on protection of civilians in time of war. He recalled the statement issued on 27 March by the President of the Security Council on behalf of its members which, inter alia, called on Israel to desist from deporting Palestinians and to ensure the safe return of those deported.

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